

ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

EUPHRADIAN AND CLARIOSOPHIC

SOCIETIES,

ON THE INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENT UPON THE
NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN,

BY F. W. PICKENS,

A MEMBER OF THE CLARIOSOPHIC SOCIETY.

COLUMBIA, S. C.:

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## ADDRESS.

It is related by the great Roman historian, that when Tarquinius Superbus was asked by his son, Sextus, what was the best mode of governing a conquered city, he replied simply by beating down with a stick the tallest poppies of his garden. In like manner Herodotus says that Periander of Corinth sent an ambassador to Thrasybulus, to ask of him what mode of government would render his authority most secure and most honorable, and that Thrasybulus answered not a word, but went into a cornfield and cut off all the highest and richest ears. Periander understood what was meant and acted accordingly, by putting to death the leading and most powerful men of the city.

This illustrates at once, in a simple manner, the striking difference between ancient organization and modern civilization. Absolute power and physical force were the basis of the former; while there is pervading all modern society a secret and undefinable responsibility to moral and intellectual power, which soothes unbidden each sense and sensibility of man.

Amongst the ancients, their very gods touched the earth, and moved upon the affairs of men in mere physical attributes. The strong man was the object of their admiration, and they bowed in idolatry before Hercules, because his strength enabled him to strangle serpents, as they supposed, in his infancy; and worshipped Mars because of his prowess in arms. This was the taint of their philosophy, their morals and their religion.

When we look back beyond the age of the Antonines and Trajan—that magnificent and gorgeous era of Roman history, when society was moulding itself into new forms and about to emerge into a new destiny—the wonder is that the philosophy and religion of antiquity stood so long; and we are now amazed that, under their combined influence, mankind made such development as they did. Their imagination and refinements of sense were cultivated to the most exquisite degree; and the truth is, in taste, in poetry and eloquence, the Greeks at this day govern the world. In morals and philosophy, Socrates has had no superior as an original thinker; and in ethics and politics, Aristotle has been a master mind for others to copy from. So of Homer and Demosthenes in poetry and eloquence.

But, notwithstanding all their transcendent genius and mighty works, that vital part of society, their religion and their gods, have been swept together from the face of the earth, not with fire and sword, but by a profounder and a purer system, a system far more subtle and refined, and far better suited to the restless longing of the soul.

Why is all this, and from whence did it come?

The Founder of this new system did not come sword in hand to desolate with blood and fire, but came in the humility of simple Truth, and boldly proclaimed that all the natural tendencies of the human heart were wrong—that all previous religion was false. Independent of Divinity, the new system announced is so full of truth and wisdom, and its Author shows such profound knowledge of the human heart, that it at once arrests the deepest emotions of the soul, and touches the tenderest sympathies of the human mind. In its early progress all society was thrown into commotion. The everlasting hills themselves could not seem more securely imbedded than did the old Greek and Roman systems, sustained as they were by the world, conquered and prostrated under Pretorian bands and emperors, whose absolute and unlimited sway have never been equalled upon this earth. Yet, notwithstanding all this, the new system, which was directly antagonist to everything around it, made its way amid convulsions, and struggles, and blood and power, travelling in “the greatness of its strength, conquering and to conquer,” until all society was moulded into a new form.

The followers of Plato throughout Greece and at Alexandria were the first of the ancient schools to adopt the new system, and claim it as a part of their own. The principles of their great founder were less repugnant to it than most of the other schools. No such change was ever effected in the radical sentiments and feelings of civilized man as was produced by the advent of these new and profound doctrines. But notwithstanding the innate truth and power of this new system, yet we are struck with the great necessity of human government in early aid of its progress and final triumph. And in this point of view we propose to contemplate the *influence of government upon the nature and destiny of man*.

If Constantine had not taken Christianity and adopted it as part of his government, the wit of man cannot imagine what would have been the consequences upon society at this day. And if Henry the Eighth of England had not determined, from the worst of passions, to create himself the head of an independent church, for the purposes of grant-

ing divorcee, no one can tell what might have been the destiny even of the Protestant religion.

Governments themselves form and train up the minds and sentiments, and make, as it were, the very nature of those they operate upon. True, you occasionally see individual minds that rise up superior to all surrounding circumstances, and boldly grasp those great truths which stand out as beacons upon the tide, to guide and direct the mariner as he floats on the current through the gloom and darkness of human events. But the great mass, in their hopes and their joys, in their sentiments and in their ideas, are almost entirely controlled and modified by the governments which have made their impress upon the very nature of man himself.

A great philosopher has likened the mind to a blank sheet of paper, ready to receive any idea that may be impressed upon it, and to reflect back the impress. The innate ideas, if any there be, that slumber in the soul of man are at best but confined to a few, who seem to be of the elect and chosen, blessed with a quickening genius that rises superior to all surrounding circumstances, and looks "through nature up to nature's God." Such there may be, but they are few and far apart, whose lights tremble here and there, like the rays of fixed stars upon the tide of time. It is very much to be doubted whether there has ever lived a man whose ideas, and sentiments, and principles have not been, more or less, moulded and modified by the government under whose power he has been born and reared. True, the brute creation have unerring instincts that seldom, if ever, change; but even they are modified by climate and by their raising. The camel would be helpless and perish on the frozen hills of Lapland; and in like manner the reindeer would be useless and famish upon the sands of Arabia. But man alone lives and flourishes in every climate—his plastic nature adapts itself to all circumstances—he is active and useful under all governments, and is a totally different being under different forms and under different systems.

Why is it that the Turk loves to die, sword in hand, under the banner of the Prophet? And why is it that the Christian, with equal zeal, will follow the cross over fields of blood? It is because they both receive their impulse and impress, and their whole nature is made, from the system under which they are born and reared.

Man is not the creature of climate, nor does the physical world make the higher attributes of his nature. The modern Greeks are a low and miserable race, and yet they live upon the same hills, and breathe the same air as did the Lacedemonians and the Athenians of old. They

walk daily over those plains under which sleep the mighty dead, and the very stones rise up to reflect back upon them the blush of shame and of conscious degradation. The lazy lazzaroni who stretch and gape about the streets of modern Rome, and gaze on the Tarpean rock, and stalk over the Capitol Hill and Campus Martius, have even forgotten that the Scipios and the Gracchi once stood there, and diffused their moral and intellectual power over the then known world. Why is all this? and whence cometh this change in the nature of man? Think you that God, in his wrath, has withered and blasted these the fairest regions of earth that he has given as an inheritance to the human race? No! it comes from the profound workings of government upon all the qualities and attributes of man. The water is the same that those glorious Greeks and Romans of antiquity drank—the air is the same—the soil is the same—the mountains and the storms are the same—the blood and the muscles and the bones of man are the same. But his ideas, his sentiments, his sympathies, his hopes, his affections, all those moral and intellectual qualities that make him rise and stand forth in the image of his Maker, are crushed and changed forever.

The slow droppings of the rain will, by attrition, wear away into furrows the everlasting granite, and as sure, in the progress of time, does the operation of government wear into furrows the heart and the soul of man. The Jews, whose history has come down to us from the remotest antiquity, more distinctly perhaps than that of any other race, fully illustrate the truth of this great proposition. When in Egypt, under the Pharaohs, they were a degraded and low race, who made “brick without straw,” and were hewers of wood and drawers of water for others. Moses was one of those great and gifted men of the earth who rise superior to all circumstances, and he at once perceived the base degeneracy of his countrymen. After the Egyptian was slain, he fled to the distant mountains, and amid the solitary hills he was engaged for near a half century in deep and silent reflection, preparing himself for the mighty task before him. He was there inspired by Divinity that “stirs within.” He at last emerged forth, and called upon his countrymen to follow. They were at first weak, imbecile and faithless, and neither had confidence in him or their God. Under his rigid government, by hardship and suffering, they were trained for forty years, in the wilderness and amid mountains, until they were thoroughly changed in nature. It was not that they were placed under a less absolute government, but it was an elevated and spiritual government, calling forth their enthusiasm and fortitude—unfolding to them

the promised land, and exciting their holy fervor by disclosing to them that they were the chosen and elect of God. They then came down into the plains, and, under the lead of Joshua, were a brave and heroic race, conquering and subjugating the nations around them. There was a profound philosophy in their institutions, working out a thorough change in this wonderful people. They were divided into different tribes, with certain local powers to each of self-government; and they were the first people to make a division in the powers of state, and lay the incipient foundations of municipal government. This excited the different tribes to the greatest energy, and quickened the remote branches of society by opening the powers of local government to all, and by that, developing the greatest spirit and fortitude in all. This made them an active and thinking people, and the possession of power made them an aspiring and conquering people; and thus they continued for ages the great race of the earth. When they held Palestine and made Jerusalem the queen city of the world, they were indeed a very great people, and developed all those noble qualities which have left their impress upon after ages.

The Pharisees, or great national party, held the doctrine that the powers of the priesthood belonged of right to Aaron and his descendants, and that the power of the crown belonged to David and his house, but that the supreme authority or sovereignty of the state, in the last resort, belonged alone to the whole people of Israel in their national assembly as represented in the Sanhedram. This was their ancient constitution; and it contained the elements of great development. We see in it a rational division and separation of great powers, and the recognition of great popular rights in the nation.

The Sadducees, who were a wealthy and aristocratic party, dissented from these fundamental principles, and, being fewest in numbers and ambitious of power, called in the aid of Roman arms to overthrow the constitution of their country; and Pompey and Antony successively placed a usurper upon the throne, who became the pampered tool of Roman intrigue in the division and plunder of Judea. The daring deeds and devoted heroism of the Maccabees would honor any age or any country. At length the cruel and bloody reign of Herod crushed all vitality in the system, and the people sunk into degenerate imbecility. Through fraud and division amongst themselves, their whole government became changed, and with that change they lost those high qualities which their early leaders and early founders had developed. Their seat of government was taken by Pompey and afterwards by Titus, more than two thousand years after it was founded. On the

very ruins of their Holy of Holies, Adrian raised a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, with the image of a hog carved over the entrance, as an insult to the venerable religion of this once fervent and haughty people. The very name of Jerusalem was changed, and the iron heel of Pagan Rome was upon it for ages. After three hundred years, the Christian emperors restored the name, and again raised the people to some consideration. Then the Saracens, in the seventh century, sacked their cities, and overran their country, and held it for more than four centuries, when the crusaders took it, and founded a new kingdom. But it was finally conquered by the Turks, who have governed it for more than five centuries. Their temples and tabernacles and shrines have been desecrated and debased by Mahometan barbarism, and they themselves have been scattered to the four quarters of the world, the scorn and pity of mankind.

Through all these different changes, we see in the same race a totally different people. Although their lineaments are the same, their outlines, their form and physical nature may be the same, yet the inner man, the sentiments, the spirit—that hidden fire of the soul that burns and breathes on all around it—is not the same. Their religion has been fixed, and but little changed, since the days of Moses and the Levitical laws. It is no change of their religion that has made a different moral and intellectual man of the same race in different ages of the world. No man can say that the modern Jew, wily and cunning, and occasionally creeping into the highest positions of this earth, is the same man that he was in the days of David and Solomon, when his haughty mien breathed defiance, and his proud and lofty step trod the earth like a conqueror, scorning and contemning the nations around him.

Their elaborate national historian has written their history down to the reign of Nero, and in tracing this wonderful race through all their changes, it gives us a clearer insight into human nature, perhaps, than the records of any other people. Josephus was a warrior too, and defended his country against Vespasian and Titus, and afterwards accepted favor from Titus. When the Roman arms overrun the country, and scattered his people so that they sought safety even in caves, he took protection, and wrote the religious part of his great work to conciliate the conquerors. It fills up a space of near four hundred years between the Old and New Testament.

Depressed and scattered as they have been, and moulded over by the pressure of different governments for so many centuries, we can hardly realize now how great a people they once were, and what high

virtues and noble bearing they once had. They were the first lawgivers and founders of permanent civilization for the world. There is enough in the prophecies for six thousand years to inspire them with a confident belief that they will be gathered from every land, and again blessed with a pure and invigorating government; and there is enough in their past history to make us feel confident that if ever they are thus brought together, they will again exhibit all those great qualities which heretofore made them, under their kings, so powerful in their influence upon the affairs of the world.

The Jews, the Greeks and the Romans have made a greater impression upon the ideas, the sentiments and the laws of the world than all other people who have ever lived. The Persians, from Cyrus down to the reign of Darius the Third, were a powerful people; and the mild and pious philosophy of their magi cast an overshadowing influence over the affairs of the East. In like manner the Egyptians have left memorials of their physical power, and vast works of art which impress us with the belief of their perseverance and gigantic enterprise. But in all the elements of genuine greatness, in the thoughts, in the ideas, in the principles which have elevated the human race, no people have ever equalled the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans. When we reflect how little they understood of the exact sciences, except geometry—how little of geology, of chemistry and mineralogy—how little of true astronomy, of gravitation and attraction—how little of truthful philosophy—we are struck with the profound influence they have nevertheless exercised upon the sentiments, the feelings, the taste, and the thoughts of the reflecting portion of all mankind.

Next to the Jews, the Roman people present us the most distinct influences of Government upon the sentiments and nature of man. Amongst them there was always a great central head in the city, looked to for absolute government; and the provinces and distant parts were without power or local authority, save what came directly from the head. Everything was absorbed in Rome, and for more than seven hundred years there was no consideration whatever in the parts. Julius Cæsar was the first to introduce a change in this respect, and he conferred privileges upon certain provinces where he wished to use the people in the changes he was effecting in the institutions of his country.

Conquest and acquisition grew up to be a fundamental law of their empire, from the rape of the Sabines down to the reign of Adrian. The nature of their Government made them proud, arrogant, overbear-

ing and cruel ; while their power and control over the world, with the splendor of their Government at Rome, developed all the master passions—the genius and eloquence to sway mighty Senates, to command and lead armies to conquest and power ;—and then, in their luxurious and magnificent decline, we see all the richness and softness of the purest and deepest poetry.

They were too much engaged in extensive government and power ever to be a philosophical people, and in this particular they were far excelled by the Greeks. The latter people had comparatively but small territories, and were not so much given to the lust of power and conquest, and were, therefore, much more absorbed in profound reflection and abstract philosophy. The truth is, the Romans had but little philosophy, save what they borrowed from the Greek schools. Hence it is they produced no man to compare with Socrates, or Plato, or Aristotle. Even Cicero, in his "*Somnium Scipionis*," takes his ideas of immortality from Plato's *Phædon* ; and his conceptions as to our planetary system, and the shape of the heavenly bodies, with their daily motion making the music of the spheres, were all borrowed from Pythagoras.

But in the practical affairs of life—in great generalship, statesmanship, and in enlarged intellectual eloquence announcing the broad principles that govern a state or empire—they are without equals. The workings of a great system of Government educated them, through centuries, for these matters.

After the Tarquins were expelled for an infamous crime, even the domestic virtues took deep root for a time, and the manners and habits of this haughty people were modified and softened.

Individuals are educated by reading, observation and reflection, but a nation or a people are alone educated by great events. Those events that stand out in the history of a nation or a people make their impress upon the public mind, and in fact make national character. The same race have totally different characteristics under a republic and under an absolute monarchy. It is not that one is less despotic than the other—for a republic may often be as despotic as a monarchy, but the different forms elicit different qualities, and create a demand for different talents. A people who have been in luxury and depotism for ages naturally become effeminate and inert ; and a people in a republic, where the avenues to power are open to all, naturally become active and aspiring. So, after the change of her seven Kings, Rome developed new and different qualities, and her people exhibited a different nature.

With her elections and Tribunes, her people became stormy, and factious, and turbulent. When they were conquered by Brennus, they made Cammillus a Dictator, and he rescued his country. This was a precedent, under a republic, of creating absolute power in one head, and made an era in the Government. From the age of the Scipios to the Gracchi, the stern and simple virtues prevailed. They were even trained to cruelty by their Gladiators; but it was, nevertheless, their heroic age. Their meetings in the Campus Martius was nothing but a council of armed men. The people were turbulent, abhorred luxury, and were a fierce race, but simple in their manners.

Their Government was made by a constant struggle between the Plebians and Patricians, and consisted of frequent concessions from the latter to the former—making a constitutional compromise between the great powers of the State, mostly irregular, and creating, in fact, a mixture of Aristocracy and Democracy.

The factions of Sylla and Marius were the exponents of these two elements in their Constitution—the former Aristocratic, and the latter Democratic. They educated and prepared the people for their far more able and subtle successors—the Pompeys and the Cæsars.

Their Government lost its balance and checks from the Tribunes and the Senate, and all power was thrown into the hands of an Emperor, as a necessary refuge from anarchy and faction.

The age of the illustrious Catulus and Cato, and Marcus Brutus—of Hortensius, and Lucullus, and Cicero—was a marked era in Roman life—it was a turning point in Roman affairs. The austerity, and fortitude, and patriotism that had marked their character before, began to decline. Lucullus was not only a distinguished orator, but a successful General, with high administrative talent—strict and accountable in his public transactions, yet so refined and luxurious that he gave way before Pompey.

The austerity and simplicity of Cato were the relics of a former age; and, in his desperation, he threw himself upon his sword.

Cicero had accumulated the learning of ages, and was the master-thinker of his day; yet his magnificent villas, as well as those of Hortensius, and their luxurious enjoyments, showed the taint of a decaying Republic; and his bloody head was exhibited in the Forum as the triumph of a new dynasty.

Marcus Junius Brutus—in whose veins flowed the blood of that Junius, who swore vengeance to the Tarquins upon the dagger dripping with the blood of Lucretia—was brave and heroic, and yet he, nevertheless, sunk under the tide of that corruption and profligacy which

was about to sweep over his country, and change forever the very nature of her people. The change in the government was effecting a thorough modification in the domestic habits and virtues, feelings and sentiments of the people.

Pompey and Cæsar, Anthony, Octavius and Lepidus laid the foundations of a profound alteration in the whole government, and with that change, the body politic became enervated and debased. By the great events that then happened, the people were educated and trained up to the yoke of their coming masters. Their wrists and their ankles were being made pliable to the chains and the fetters that were forging.

Cicero, in his immortal letters, written to intimate friends at this period and during his banishment, and in his noble phillippics against Anthony, depicts, with a master hand, the radical change making in the entire government, and with it the alteration making in the very nature and feelings of the people. His letters give us a nearer and clearer insight into the thoughts and motives of the different actors, and different parties and factions, than any historian can give, for they were written in the freedom of friendship, and in the most natural and easy manner, and by one who understood the philosophy of their system more profoundly than any man of his day, except perhaps, Cæsar. By these letters we are carried back to the fireside of the Romans—to their families—their domestic ties and domestic interests, as well as to their Forum and their Senate.

And it shows how great a thinker he was, that his private letters should be handed down to us so perfect, through such revolutions, for near two thousand years. Take his works all together, and no man has been his equal in giving enlarged ideas and thoughts to the world since his day, unless, perhaps, it may be Burke. He it was who first announced the great and radical undermining in the government of his country.

When he came forth from his retirement, he had no party to sustain him, but stood alone, with no power, save a noble and glorious eloquence, and hurled his burning denunciations against Anthony. For a time, he turned back the tide, and held a cunning tyrant at bay, with armed Legions at his heels. Under these circumstances, at that period, he presents a grand moral spectacle, which will command the admiration of every age as long as patriotism shall live, and Genius shall trim her midnight lamp to cast a brighter light upon the noble picture as it stands out on the canvas of history. True, during the power of Pompey and Cæsar he had taken protection for a short time, with a hope, as he says, to avert things, and to give some direction to

events. Cato, of Utica, censured him for it, and threw himself upon his sword rather than survive the usurpation in his government.

Both these illustrious men were ridiculed in their day by those in power and place as theorists and impracticable abstractionists. And so, in like manner, are all men who have the sagacity to perceive changes made in their Government, by the corrupt and ambitious. Men who fawn for popularity, and who love office and place more than they do country, are ever ready now, as they were in the days of Cato and Cicero, to denounce as theorists, those who have the boldness to warn the people of danger and the integrity to proclaim the truth.

As these great men predicted, the Government of Rome was altered and with it the whole frame-work of Society was changed, and the very sentiments and nature of the people moulded over anew.

Then came on the absolute reign of the Emperors. We no longer see the stormy meetings of their armed freemen in the Campus Martius, or their proud and haughty Senate decreeing the law of empire. But in the place of the former, we have Prætorian bands conferring office, and in place of the latter, we see a Council of eunuchs installed in the palace.

Trajan, Adrian, and the Antonines, were wise, benevolent, and just, and developed the resources of the Roman Empire with genius and enterprise. Their Government was absolute over all that was then known of the world, except the vast quagmires and morasses that existed beyond the Danube, to the streams that empty into the Baltic, which contained a fierce, unconquered race.

Under their sway, there was a longer period of peace, at one time, than the world has ever enjoyed. No people were ever more wealthy, or more prosperous. The arts, and refinements, and luxuries of life were cultivated to a higher degree than has ever been under any other Government. They slept profoundly for three hundred years, under the change of Government, in the arms of Luxury and Despotism, until the whole body politic became a paralyzed mass.

The valor, the patriotism, and stern simplicity of the Roman citizen, in the proud and palmy days of the Republic, were gone, and gone forever. The Government had usurped all their rights and powers, and with that they lost their insentives, their spirit, and their enegy, and became a totally different people. Their sentiments and thoughts, their habits and feelings, individually and collectively, were modified and formed over anew.

No man can read the great history of Gibbon without becoming deeply impressed with the profound alteration that the changes in the

Roman Government made upon the very nature and destiny of man. These changes, in fact, made a new race. In many points of view, his history has the advantage of Tacitus or Livy, or most other great histories, in the fact that he wrote of a people and of a country that he was not identified with, and he wrote of events and of a people centuries after they had existed. In these particulars he is greatly the superior of Josephus.

I have selected the Romans and the Jews to illustrate more fully the influence of government upon the nature and destiny of man, because we have, perhaps, as distinct and intimate knowledge of those two people, and their laws, from authentic sources, as of any other people, and they stand out more fully upon history.

The destiny of one race has been fulfilled, and of the other important events are predicted, yet to be fulfilled. Through one race has been transmitted and handed down to us the Pentateuch with the Levitical Laws, having the deepest influence upon the nations of Christendom at this day. And the other race have spread the principles of the civil law over far more than half the most cultivated parts of the civilized world. In fact, the two races combined, have given law to all the most refined and intellectual portions of mankind.

In one particular they differ greatly. The Jews have never changed their religion materially, only modifying it according to the different governments under which they have been placed.

The Romans, on the contrary, changed radically their religion. A small portion of the Jews withdrew, and were the founders and followers of the Christian religion, but the nation kept together. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the body, and many doubted the immortality of the soul, while the Pharisees believed both. These were great sects, and disputed violently, but never separated from the nation, as to their forms of national religion. It may be said to have been more a division in society than anything else—the former being the more wealthy and aristocratic class, and the latter poorer and more humble.

But the Romans, when they came to dispute about the Christian religion, the whole nation entered into it, and was convulsed and agitated. The followers of Plato had established their schools throughout Greece, and also at Alexandria, where they were many learned men, and they immediately took up and adopted, to a great extent, the new faith and its principles. It spread step by step, until the discussion took possession of the Empire. Persecution and blood only made it more attractive. It had within itself the Divinity of Truth.

When at last Constantine adopted it, and made it part of his government, we have the wonderful spectacle of a mighty nation, or rather a world of Pagans, being transformed into Christians, in form at least. The magic power of an Emperor's wand was waved over the land, and by enchantment, as it were, the time-honored statues and temples of ancient Mythology, consecrated by the devotion of ages, crumbled and sunk into the dust of the earth.

The Cross in the Heavens rose before the entranced vision of Constantine, and he placed it on his banners, with *εν τούτω νικα*, and made it the victorious emblem of Truth.

The most remarkable part of it is, that although they changed their religion, yet it never arrested their downward career as a people. Their government remained practically the same. The empire was divided, and as they sunk into imbecility, they had the sagacity to perceive the change in affairs, and their loss of power if they relied longer upon the sword. It was then that the power of the mitre was substituted for the sabre. They no longer had the valor and the courage to govern their distant provinces by the pike and their legions, and they raised up a spiritual power and enthroned it in the chair of the Cæsars; and under that, although changed in kind, their sway was as absolute as ever for centuries. The Goths and Vandals sacked their city and dispersed the fossil remains of their Senate; and they sent them back, in return, to their barbarian homes, a secret and mysterious government, under which they quailed in more abject fear than they had ever done before their legions and their cohorts.

It is a remarkable fact that the physical power of Rome was first broken by a hardy and victorious race from further Gaul and the regions of the Baltic; and that centuries afterwards, her spiritual power over the world was first broken by Luther and his intrepid followers from nearly the same regions. And in this point of view the Teutonic race have made their deep impress upon modern civilization.

Even the Goths and Vandals have their merits. We have received most of our impressions of them from historians whose countries they overran and conquered, and but little justice has been done them. With all their barbarism, they were a heroic and independent people, and laid the foundations of municipal government in their separate interests and independent tribes. The Vandals even swept through Africa, and in the year 445 returned to Italy and plundered Rome. It was these tribes that established separate local governments, with independent rights and powers. It was this commencement of municipal government that gave vitality to masses in large empires, and kept

alive the spirit and vigor of independence. It is municipal government that is the nursery of virtue and freedom. Without it, the supreme head absorbs everything, and becomes a mass of despotism and corruption. It was the influence of these separate tribes that laid the foundations of the German empire; and it was the separate kingdoms, and principalities, and dukedoms and states of Germany that first protected Luther and his followers in their great moral and religious reform. It was the same organization that finally broke the power of Napoleon and overthrew his central despotism; and it is in the same states and principalities of Germany that we have any hope now for fixed principles of independence in Europe. Other powers may make revolutions, but it is Germany alone, with her separate reserved sovereignties and municipal governments, that can fix great landmarks and give us principles of chartered liberty.

The liberty of the masses as a people never lasts. It is chartered rights, fixed and established by local governments, identified with peace and order, that can alone give permanent law and liberty. France has abolished her hereditary peerage, with their territorial or landed interests, and has made an agrarian division of her lands into small parcels; and her provinces are without municipal governments. There can be no fixed liberty there. Dynasties may be changed, but it will not settle liberty. Paris, with grapeshot, will still govern France.

In Hungary and Italy there may be some hope from their separate provincial governments and states, but Germany is in reality the bulwark of modern independence, if there should be any in Europe. Rich in her philosophy, her education and universities, her great and learned men cannot be crushed forever. The beacon-lights of independence may yet burn from her thousand schools and universities, and lead Europe in the path of separate local governments, establishing chartered and municipal liberty.

This was the great defect in the Roman system. The empire grew to be so extensive, and being without local or municipal governments, except such as was sent them from the central power, the provinces became enervated, dead masses, hanging like a paralysed limb to the body. They thus fell from the trunk, or were an easy prey to conquest. When the system was a republic, and confined to smaller territory, it exhibited great energy and stimulated all classes. But when it became extended, and the government was altogether in the hands of one man, there was no quickening energy in the parts—there was no system to diffuse and preserve vitality in the extremities, and congestion of the head followed of necessity. Under this system, the people grew inert

and effeminate as compared with the more exciting days of the republic, when employment in the stirring occupation of government and arms filled their minds. They grew wealthy and indulgent, and, to fill up their idle moments, they entered largely into the disputations of the schools. The Greek language and Greek philosophy were studied, and even Cato of Utica, after first denouncing both as effeminate, became imbued with Greek scholarship. After the change of government and the establishment of the empire, Greek literature, with her ethics and philosophy, were diffused throughout Rome, and may be said to have become nationalised. The followers of Plato, who was himself an expounder of, and commentator upon Socrates, were the ablest, and spread more extensively. They collected books and learned men everywhere. When the far deeper sect of the Christians arose and began to attract attention, the Roman mind was already prepared to embark with enthusiasm upon the doctrines that were advanced by the different churches and bishops. They entered with zeal into the contest even between the *homoousions* and the *homoiousions*, and were deeply absorbed in the various theories as to the *λογος*. Even an emperor, the great Constantine, preached sermons as well as fought for the new faith; and another emperor, the learned Julian, entered the lists and wrote against Christianity.

The great churches of Alexandria and Antioch would have spread the new system far over the East but for the rise of Mohammed. He took up the literal doctrines of the Old Testament, as expounded in practice by Joshua and Gideon, and followed the example of the Levites as to force, when they came out from the worshippers of the golden calf, and stood by Moses in his call for those who were "on the side of the Lord," and drew the sword over the slaughter of three thousand who had fallen from the true faith. His mystical dreams and rhapsodies were collected into shape by his successors in the form of the Koran, and appended to the Old Testament. It had no philosophy or morals in it, but inculcated the doctrine that the highest happiness, here and hereafter, consisted in mere animal indulgence, with the exception of wine, and opened up unbridled enjoyments to his followers. He reversed the philosophy of Plato and the Greeks, who taught benevolence, and, to a certain extent, subjugation of the passions, and, in precept and practice, was the direct antagonist of Christ. The meekness of humility and wisdom was in one, and the arrogance of conquest and lust of power was in the other.

Strange as it may seem, yet his system was eminently suited to the people he was called upon to lead at that time. The Byzantine em-

perors and prelates had, by persecution and oppression, made violent feuds and sectarian Christians in the east. The Jews and Nestorians had been driven into Persia and Arabia. The mother of Mohammed herself was a Jewess, and in early childhood had deeply imbued his quick mind with the traditions of her race and the mysteries of her religion. The Arabs were an unmixed race, devoted to poetry and full of mystical enthusiasm. They were distracted by a great many creeds. Many were idolaters, and some attached themselves to Judaism and some to Christianity, all full of zeal and controversy. The hegira occurred in the first part of the seventh century, and after that, all Arabia became united under Mohammed. He swept through the land with fire and sword, and established what may be called the government of a military religion. His spiritual dreams were for conquest, and to establish a rigid government, and they constituted his Koran. Being a calculating fanatic himself, it was eminently suited to his fanatical followers. It is remarkable that a book of so little philosophy or real wisdom should have had such influence upon a large portion of mankind. Under its teachings a powerful government was raised up, and the successors of Mohammed, with their Saracenic hordes, swept like a storm from the tropics over the fairest portions of the earth. They destroyed the great Christian Churches of Antioch and Alexandria, took the holy land, sacked Jerusalem, and rolled back the tide of Christian civilization upon the shores of Europe. But for the extraordinary rise of this military religious government, the destiny of man in the East would have been far different at this day. It is true, the crusaders at one time drove them back, and re-conquered Jerusalem, but they held it less than ninety years. And now, for more than five hundred years, the country where Christianity, and with it the whole basis of modern civilization, took its first rise from the impulse of Divinity itself, has been under the sway of an entirely different system. And the power and the effects of government have been such, that you can scarcely discover in the nature of man any traces of the people or the race who once watched and nursed those early fires that have since illumined the world.

It was the terrific power of the Saracens and the followers of Mohammed that forced a more intimate union between the secular and ecclesiastical power of Rome. It was essential not only to sustain their religion but their very race. The union of church and state was as natural, at that period, as any other event in history. The East had been overrun—the sacred mountains smoked with the fires of vengeance kindled by a fierce and bloody race; and from the very altars and

temples where the apostles themselves had ministered, rose the incense of an unholy faith. The church fell back upon the power of government, and the government relied upon the spiritual enthusiasm of the church; and the two combined saved Europe from conquest and desolation. And in these great events, looking back upon them at this day, the influence of government upon the destiny and nature of man, and his civilization, is as distinctly seen as is the hand of Providence upon the physical world around us. As long as the danger of overthrow was great, and the pressure from without was kept up, the church and state were compelled to develop, to a certain extent, daring and manly virtues with fierce enthusiasm. And hence we see their combined influence upon the nature and sentiments of people in those peculiar days of the crusader age. When the danger was over, and the followers of Mohammed were themselves satiated with conquest and plunder, and began to grow imbecile and inactive, then of course the Church of Rome fell into corruption and abuse.

When the Roman empire fell to pieces, and their secular power became separated into different governments, the spiritual central power still held its mysterious control. When it was no longer sustained by the power of absolute emperors, it was forced to cunning, artifice, and hypocrisy for a time. There was occasionally, in the spiritual head, genius and vast learning, and, with its wonderful and stupendous machinery, it held under its power the civilization and the very nature of man for centuries. The transcendent talents of Hilderbrand restored the power of Rome, and placed it where the Cæsars had ever aspired to do in their palmiest days. But for the monks, and monasteries, and cloisters of the dark ages, most that is known of literature and previous civilization would probably have been lost. The sparks of a smothered fire were there kept sacred until they burst forth like meteors and shooting stars over a world sleeping in darkness.

It is easy for us to see the errors of the past, but when we survey all the circumstances, and examine the powerful workings of government, and the mighty events that have controlled man, we cannot but be wonderfully struck to see how naturally everything has taken place in the unerring progress of time. It was as natural for the Church of Rome, long allied as it was with political power, to run into excess and corruption, as it was for government itself, when unrestrained, to become corrupt. It was natural, after the fall of the Roman empire and its dismemberment, that the church should fall back upon art, superstition and management to sustain itself, because the power of the secular government was no longer in the hands of an absolute emperor. And

under such a system, it was entirely natural that a feeble, degenerate and hypocritical race should spring up. And in like manner, it was natural that the hardy and more masculine race of Germany, nurtured by separate local governments, with local interests and local pride, should feel restive under the yoke imposed upon them by a degenerate and effeminate people. And so likewise of the cantons of Switzerland. In their country and under their governments, it was as natural that Calvin and Luther should spring up, as it is that the sturdy oak should grow in the mountain cove and defy the storm, or that the lion should shake his proud main in defiance upon the solitary sands of Africa.

We are apt to imagine that we could have acted differently in great events, but let it be remembered that man himself is but little more than the creature of events. There is a destiny that shapes our ends. Notwithstanding all this, much may be avoided. Governments are in the hands of men. True, circumstances to a great extent make them. But with wisdom, virtue and an energetic spirit, they may be guided and directed in proper channels. Vigilance, patriotism and activity may preserve them from change and decay. We must realize the truth that it is through governments the profoundest impressions can be made upon the human race for good or for evil.

It is not merely because man is a Tartar or an Arab that he is wild and fierce, or that because he is an Italian or an Armenian that he is cunning, weak and effeminate. It is because they have felt for ages the impress upon their different races of different forms of government. The human body will adapt itself to the bandages and shackles that may be thrown around it from early infancy, and so does a government, operating through a series of generations upon a particular people, mould and form their sentiments, their ideas and their feelings, until it finally affects their whole nature. In the remains of animals, of fish and of vegetables, and in the foot-prints of birds left in the different strata of the earth, we read the nature and history of the vegetable and animal kingdoms as distinctly and clearly as if living specimens were before us; and so, in like manner, in the records and history of governments, we read the nature and sentiments of man as distinctly in the power and impress they make upon the human race.

And if this be true, how deeply important is it to us to know and understand the philosophy of our government—what it is and whither it tends. It is a fatal delusion to suppose that any man is exempt from its influence. We may be insensible to its present effects, but our children are gradually trained up and inevitably formed under its influence and power. The whole framework of society is deeply affected by its silent and slow

workings. Under the reign of Augustus, the Roman people retained all their previous forms of government, but the spirit and nature of the government were entirely changed, and they reposed in quiet under the delusion that they still were free. It is thus of every people who have gradually lost their liberties. The movements are slow and insensible, but sure and silent. The people are lulled to rest on the *euthanasia* of their rights. They awake from their slumber, and the historian records their degeneracy and downfall long before they themselves are aware of it. Such is the progress of corruption and decay. Those who foresee the course of events, and warn their country of the change in advance and the danger to their institutions, are denounced as impracticable and visionary enthusiasts; and, at the same time, the man who loves popularity and place, who is full of address and winning words spoken alike to all, who devotes himself to cliques, who uses the language of apparent independence, and is, at heart, the humble tool of dominant factions—this man is called a practical wise man, and is always content with the livery and trappings of office. He, like the feather and the cork, floats on the surface, but gives no indication of the depth and the strength of the current beneath, undermining the institutions and the liberties of his country.

The tendency of all modern society is to aggregation, where the individual man is lost and absorbed amid the masses. Whole communities and nations act together, and in their progress, with what is called manifest destiny, the responsibilities of man as an individual are no longer felt. What a man would shudder to do separately by himself, he will do together with others without remorse and without shame. The facilities of intimate connection and intercourse—the press, and the telegraph, and steam—have brought the aggregate and dominant public opinion of an empire or a people to bear down the smaller portions and overshadow all individual independence or separate thought. The tendency of this is to hurry us on into a great central vortex where all rights and local interests are to become absorbed. The question is no longer, are you right? but are you with the tide that flows on to power? The utilitarian doctrines of Franklin, expounded and enlarged by Jeremy Bentham, have made the greatest good of the greatest number the supreme law of communities. Nothing is thought of but what is physically useful. Man is but a cog in the wheel and machinery of society. The heart is treated as a mere function of the body. Those disinterested feelings which rise up unbidden to enlarge and expand the soul are treated with derision. Under this system, imagination withers, and all sentiment perishes and dies away. The frenzy for

money making is assuming the form of a national virtue. The golden calf is raised up for worship, and men bow down before it as the children of Israel did of old.

Utilitarianism and political economy may be useful in developing the physical resources of a people, but if we wish to develop those qualities, those principles, those ideas, those thoughts that kindle and glow through the pages of history, we must cultivate poetry, arms and eloquence. No people ever were a great people unless they were heroic—no people ever were a great people unless they had noble principles and commanding ideas. It was Greek philosophy and Greek poetry, so rich, so rare, so natural, that first gave those burning thoughts and ideas to the world which have kindled with enthusiasm the heart of man in every age and in every country. It was the *sacred light* of the vestal virgins to guide the worshippers of mind through the trackless ages of darkness. These ideas and these thoughts were like the rays of the sun falling through the crevices of a dungeon to light the eye and warm the heart of man, chained down as he was in the great charnel-house of corruption and barbarism for centuries. And so in politics and government, it was Jewish laws in their Pentateuch, and Jewish institutions, that first laid the foundations upon which all permanent civilization has been built—foundations which will defy forever the sweeping whirlwind of time itself. And this it is that has made them a master race of the earth. The Romans gave us the wise and broad principles of the civil law, which has produced a profound effect upon the civilization of modern times. And the Pandects of Justinian, with the Institutes by Tribonian, will live long after the triumphs of their Cæsars are forgotten. And so in like manner the English, with their Norman blood, have given us the expansive common law, with their Magna Charta, which have developed personal rights and defined individual liberty as was never done before; and through this they have made their impress upon future ages, which will last long after Britannia's "march o'er the mountain wave" has passed from the memory of man. And so, also, if we are to be remembered in after times, it will be through our national declaration of political rights and our constitution, which will be to the separate and local rights of independent communities what the common law of England has been to the separate rights of individuals. But we must remember that a great charter defining liberty, if suffered to die from the imbecility of a degenerate race, will be but a standing monument of a purer and better race, by which to measure our own deep degradation and infamy.

Blocks of chiseled marble and monuments of everlasting granite may rise up like the pyramids of Egypt, and defy the beating storms of centuries—so may the glittering armor of triumphant conquerors flash and blaze, like the lightning of the elements, down the stream of time—but these and all these can never make a great people. Nor can vast and mighty empire do it. Great ideas that expand the mind, that give a wider range to the thoughts of man—great principles that elevate the soul, that warm the heart, that enlarge the sentiments, that lift man from the selfishness of this world, and point his vision to the portals of a purer life—these, *these* are the qualities that make a truly *great people*.

Many nations, great in conquest, great in the resources of wealth and empire, have passed, as it were, from even the remembrance of posterity, simply because they have left no great principles, no *ideas* that stand out like those fixed stars that twinkle and glow in the skies, to which the hardy mariner can raise his quadrant, and determine his latitude and departure *amid the storms and the billows of this world's perilous voyage*.





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